



Washington State Department of Early Learning

Portable Background Check Registry

Questions and Answers

Q. What is the Department of Early Learning (DEL) background check process?

A. The DEL background check process is as follows:

- All applicants applying to work, volunteer or who reside in a child care setting with unsupervised access to children must submit a completed background check.
- Completing the background check online saves time and money. There is still a paper application process for those who do not have access to the online process.
- All individuals who currently are licensed, volunteer, employed or residing with a licensed family home must renew their background check between July 2, 2012 and June 30, 2013. If the individual's background check expires prior to June 30, 2013, it must be completed before the expiration date.
- Once an application has been submitted the background check request, either online or by paper, the background check is processed through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Background Check Central Unit (BCCU). The BCCU submits the data to the Washington State Patrol (WSP).
- The BCCU processes the data and submits the results to DEL.
- DEL field staff review the BCCU results and then complete a character, competency and suitability determination.
- DEL field staff complete the process by issuing a final determination of **cleared** or **disqualified**. The results are completed and sent to the applicant and provider.
- Results of the background check are in MERIT.

Online Applications Steps

- Completing the background check online saves time and money. Paper applications will still be accepted but at a higher processing cost. (\$12.00 online vs. \$24.00 for paper applications.)
- The first step in process is to register [in MERIT](#). Once the registration is complete, the individual will have a USER ID (Identification) and password.
- Sign into MERIT with the USER ID and password and complete the "application" for the portable background check.
- The individual completes the application with an electronic signature. An electronic signature means the person adopts the content of the electronic message and claims to have completed all information truthfully and accurately.
- Print the payment coupon, attach the correct payment amount and mail to the correct address.
- An email is sent to the individual when fingerprints are required. Email accounts should be checked regularly until the process is complete.
- If fingerprints are required, contact the fingerprint vendor listed on the information and schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Portable Background Check Questions and Answers

Paper Applications

- Paper applications are available for those who do not have access to the internet. Individuals are encouraged to apply online to save time and money. Paper applications have a higher processing cost. (\$12.00 online vs. \$24.00 for paper applications)
- A [MERIT](#) account is required to begin the background check process. Ask the local DEL licensing office for a paper MERIT application and a portable background check form.
- Complete both forms carefully, sign both forms and complete the payment section. Attach the correct payment amount and mail to the correct address. Make sure you have included the correct postage to cover the mailing costs.
- Once your MERIT application is complete, DEL will begin processing your portable background check application.
- Information is sent to the applicant by US Postal Service when fingerprints are required and no email address is listed. Contact the fingerprint vendor to schedule an appointment.

Q. What does “unsupervised access” mean?

A. Washington Administrative Code 170-06 defines unsupervised access as follows: (a) An individual will or may have the opportunity to be alone with a child in child care at any time for any length of time; and (b) Access that is not within constant visual or auditory range of the licensee an employee authorized by DEL, nor a relative or guardian of the child in child care.”

Q. What is a character, competency and suitability determination?

A. The term “character, competency and suitability” is often used to describe the overall suitability of an applicant to provide child care services. An applicant may not have a criminal background history or any substantiated findings from CPS or DLR/CPS. However, the applicant may have had their foster care license revoked for improper care. DEL may decide that the applicant does not have adequate “character, competency and suitability” to be a child care provider.

Costs for Background Checks and Fingerprinting

The PBC registry requires all individuals with a current clearance re-apply for a background clearance between July 2, 2012 and June 30, 2013. For some individuals who have been previously cleared, the clearance will require fingerprints. DEL contracts with MorphoTrust/L-1 to provide electronic fingerprinting services across the state of Washington. Fingerprints are not taken by local law enforcement agencies, and/or private contractors.

Q. Who pays for the cost of the background check and fingerprint processing?

A. Beginning July 1, 2012, DEL will be charging a fee for all background checks to pay for upkeep of the portable background check clearance registry. Child Care providers are no longer required to pay fees associated with background checks. Child care providers may voluntarily pay the fees on behalf of the applicant, but are not required to do so. The fees are:

- \$12 for online application
- \$24 for paper applications

The payment for the background check is made payable to DEL and sent to the Olympia address on the payment coupon. Acceptable methods of payment are business or personal check, cashier’s check or money orders. At this time, DEL is unable to accept purchase orders, electronic payments online or electronic payments by telephone. If a provider chooses to pay any fees, they can submit multiple payment coupons with a single payment.

Portable Background Check Questions and Answers

The fingerprint criminal history record check is approximately \$43. The child care provider may also voluntarily pay the fee on behalf of the applicant, but is not required to do so.

The cost of the applicants fingerprint is paid by one of the following methods:

- E-Check from Saving or Checking Account
- Credit or Debit Card
- MorphoTrust/L-1 Enrollment Services Preapproved escrow account

Q. What is the difference between a local criminal history background check and a fingerprint check?

A. A local criminal history background check is performed through the WSP. The results will identify if the applicant has a criminal history in Washington State. *In other words*, any arrests and convictions in Washington are listed on the report.

A fingerprint check is required for individuals who apply for the first-time to have a DEL background check clearance. Fingerprints are sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for a nationwide criminal history background check. An applicant who has been fingerprinted will have their entire criminal history (arrests and convictions) sent to DEL for further character, competency and suitability determination. Applicants who are fingerprinted will also have the basic WSP criminal history background check performed.

Q. What are the fingerprint requirements?

A. Beginning July 2, 2012, a fingerprint check is required for individuals who apply for the first-time to have a DEL background check clearance **and** who have not resided in the state of Washington during the three-year period before being authorized to care for children. When a fingerprint check is required, the applicant receives notification by either email or US postal service. According to RCW 43.215.215 in order to determine the suitability of persons who have unsupervised access to children in licensed child care, individuals shall be fingerprinted.

Q. If a person does not live in Washington, but works in Washington; do they need to have a fingerprint check?

A. Yes, if a person is living in another state, but will have unsupervised access to children in a licensed child care in Washington, a fingerprint check has to be completed, regardless of how long they have worked in Washington (RCW 43.215.215).

Q. What is the process for fingerprinting with MorphoTrust/L-1?

A. A fingerprint appointment form is sent to the applicant by email or US Postal Service when email is not available. The applicant must then contact MorphoTrust/L-1 to schedule an appointment at one of the statewide processing sites. The applicant must make payment at the time the appointment is scheduled. The applicant brings the DEL paperwork and goes to the processing site to have the fingerprints processed using a LiveScan machine.

Q. How is the fingerprint payment deducted from the account?

A. **Debit/Credit** (any card with a Visa/MC/Discover/AE logo on it, regardless of where the funds are drawn from) – the credit card is charged when the appointment and payment information is completed and an authorization number is provided by the credit card company.

Portable Background Check Questions and Answers

E-Check (any transaction where the bank account info is provided as means of payment) –the account is checked for available funds and the amount is placed on hold as a pending electronic funds transfer (EFT). Depending on a particular bank's processing schedule the funds may take up to 3 days to be charged/withdrawn from the account.

Escrow –funds in the escrow account are placed on hold when the appointment is made and the licensee indicates the escrow account information; if an applicant doesn't show up to their appointment, the funds are put back to the escrow account; if the applicant is printed, the funds are charged to the escrow account.

Q. If the applicant doesn't show or cancels after payment is made, how can the licensee request a return of their funds?

A. The refund policy is at the bottom of [MorphoTrust/L-1's home page](#). The individual who paid needs to submit a written request for the refund, and MorphoTrust/L-1's finance department processes the request. Email requests are accepted.

<https://wa.ibtfingerprint.com/>

Q. Does the applicant receive a confirmation once the appointment is completed?

A. An e-mail confirmation will be sent to the applicant after the appointment confirmation is completed.

The applicant may need to check their spam/junk mail accounts as many email providers filter emails that appear to be system generated. Email confirmations will be from the following email address:

noreply@morphotrust.com

Q. What is a LiveScan Machine?

A. A LiveScan Machine is a small photocopy machine. It scans your fingerprints and creates electronic copies without the mess of ink and paper cards.

Q. What is the benefit of LiveScan fingerprinting?

A. LiveScan fingerprinting helps to reduce the number of fingerprint rejections and speeds up the process by allowing fingerprints to be sent electronically rather than through the mail.

Q. What forms of identification can be used for identification at the fingerprint appointment?

A. Identification must be a government-issued identification and have a clear photo of you and your signature in order to be a valid form of identification. In addition to what is listed on the fingerprint appointment form, the MorphoTrust/L-1 technicians are allowed to accept:

- US Driver's License, or any Federal, State, or Local Government issued ID (Including a Washington State Learner's Permit)
- Any US Armed Services ID (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, etc...)
- US Passport
- Foreign Passport (with photo and signature)
- Federally Recognized Tribal ID
- Student ID is acceptable for applicants under age 18

The MorphoTrust/L-1 technician will not accept any form of expired identification by itself.

Portable Background Check Questions and Answers

Q. How long will a fingerprint appointment take?

A. Appointments take about 15 minutes and must be scheduled in advance. Online appointment scheduling is available at www.L1Enrollment.com. Applicants must be on time for their appointment. If an applicant walks in without an appointment or shows up late, MorphoTrust/L-1 will not complete the fingerprint process. Some of the fingerprinting sites **do not** allow children to be in the printing facility. Please call MorphoTrust/L-1 for more information: 1.888.771.5097.

Q. Is personal information safe?

A. MorphoTrust/L-1 encrypts data before sending it over a secure network. In addition, L-1/MorphoTrust utilizes industry standard full disk encryption to insure that personal information is secure on all live scan devices. Unused information is deleted from the system.

Q. How will I know when my prints have been rejected by the WSP or the FBI?

A. If either the WSP or FBI rejects your fingerprints, a reject letter will be sent to the office that requested your prints. When your fingerprints are rejected, you will need to be fingerprinted again. Contact the office requesting your prints for more information.

When fingerprints are rejected by the WSP or the FBI, call the MorphoTrust/L-1 scheduling call center to make an appointment to be re-fingerprinted: 1.888.771.5097. An appointment for reprinting cannot be scheduled online. Tell the call center staff that you are calling to schedule an appointment for reprints, and provide them with the OCA (Inquiry ID) number listed on your reject letter. There is no charge for re-fingerprinting.

Q. How many times can my fingerprints be rejected?

A. There is no limit to the number of times that prints can be rejected by the WSP. The WSP will continue to reject fingerprints until they determine they have the best set of fingerprints possible. The FBI will only reject prints two times before they will complete a national name and date of birth check. Contact the office requesting your prints for more information.

Q. Can MorphoTrust/L-1 make appointments the same day?

A. No. Same day appointments are not available. The applicant's personal information must be sent to MorphoTrust/L-1 for validation before you can schedule an appointment.

Q. How is the status of the fingerprint results shared with the applicant or licensee?

A. Contact the office that requested the fingerprints.

Q. If an individual has had an FBI check completed for an agency other than DEL, are new fingerprints required?

A. Yes. Current laws prevent sharing of fingerprint results between different state agencies.

Q. Can prints be reused for other background checks or resubmit them to the WSP if they were accepted the first time but rejected by the FBI?

A. No. Once fingerprints have been processed by the WSP, they cannot be used again. If your fingerprints are rejected by the FBI, you will need to be printed again.

Portable Background Check Questions and Answers

Q. Is there anything an applicant can do to improve the fingerprint scan?

A. The most common reason for rejected fingerprints is a lack of ridge detail in the scanned image. As people get older, fingerprints become lighter and more difficult to capture. Ridge detail can be affected by many things such as continued use of paper products, chemical use, gardening, pottery, or continued exposure to water. To help combat this problem, the applicant needs to hydrate their skin for several consecutive days before your appointment with a water-based lotion. On the day of the appointment, do not use the lotion.

Q. Where can I find more information regarding the fingerprinting process?

A. Contact the DEL office that requesting your fingerprints or visit the website below:

MorphoTrust/L-1Website: <http://www.l1enrollment.com/state/?st=wa>

MorphoTrust/L-1 Call center: 1.888.771.5097